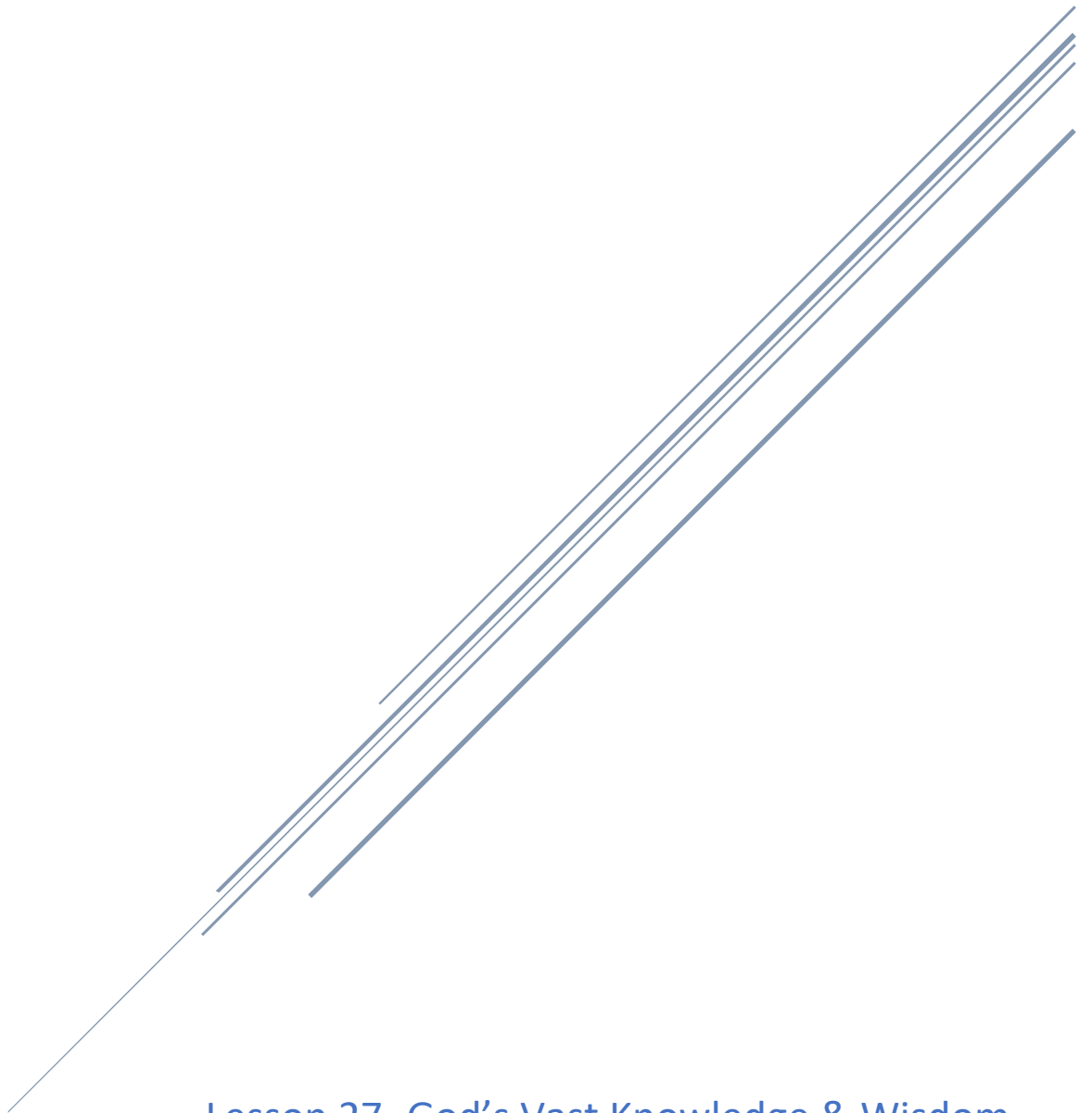


THE KINGDOM, THE BIBLE, & US

Understand the Bible's story, Jesus' importance, and Our place in God's plan



Lesson 27- God's Vast Knowledge & Wisdom
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Introduction

Israel is in a bad situation. They are slaves to the nation of Egypt. Their young boys have had their lives taken and many more threatened. They have heard about the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob handed down for over four hundred years. However, the Lord whom they have heard about seems distant and unmoved by their plight.

God has been preparing a deliverer though. Moses' status as the adopted grandson of Pharaoh, a Jew by birth, and a man who has chosen to identify with the Hebrews will all come into play for his development.

Moses took matters in his own hands and murdered an Egyptian beating a Hebrew to death. He ran away as a fugitive the land of Midian. There he married into the family of a shepherd and tended his flocks for decades.

In our last lesson we specifically examined the first portion of God's burning bush call to Moses. Moses had some excuses as to why he was not the right man to go back to Egypt and deliver Israel. God overcame these objections by reminding Moses it was God who will do the work, Moses was to be the instrument to be used by God's hand.

One major important theme that came out of this was when Moses asked God who He really was. God said He is, the I Am Who I Am. God essentially shared the nature of who He is to Moses with a name. God is the eternally, the only truly eternal self-existent Being. There is no other like Him. I also believe God was being somewhat mysterious to say to Moses, "don't worry about asking me these questions, I am who I say I am, you go do what I have called you to."

God revealed Himself as the great and mighty I Am. The only one true God. This word in Hebrew is four consonants. Y-H-W(or V)-H. Hebrew originally had no vowels. Vowels were added much later, after the times of Christ on earth. This means we are not for sure how to say the special name of God. We typically pronounce it as Yahweh.

This adds to the mystery and awesome nature of the God we serve, the God who called Moses.

Finally, we looked at John 8:53-59 and saw Jesus called Himself, the I Am. Jesus claimed full equality with Yahweh.

Let's keep exploring the rest of this charge God gives Moses.

God's Wisdom/Knowledge Knows No Limits

Moses objected to the call of God to go to Egypt and deliver out Israel from wicked Pharaoh. He first said to God, "You've got the wrong guy, you can't mean me!" God overcame this objection by reminding Moses that it is God who will be with Moses and work through him.

Moses then objected by asking God who He really is. This is not as strong of an objection as the first one, but yet Moses is still in a sense stalling God and asking, "but I don't really know who you are, how can Israel know?"

This is when God revealed His special name, the I Am, Yahweh.

There is a section in chapter three we need to focus in on before we move to chapter four and see the rest of Moses' objections.

Exodus 3:18-22

God speaks in future tense terms. Notice in verse 18, "They will pay attention..." God assured Moses that when he spoke to the elders of Israel about the mission to deliver Israel out Egypt, they would listen to him. In Hebrew the phrase, "they will heed/they will listen" is in a perfect tense which means the action is viewed as if already completed. We can think of it as when we say, "consider it done." We have not done the action yet, but we are for sure going to see it through that we can talk as if it is already done. God spoke like this to Moses. "You will go, and I already know they will listen to you, consider it already a settled fact that they will listen."

How could God know what their response to Moses would be?

We get a clue to God's immense knowledge of the future, including future choices of people. We will see this even more clearly in our next verses.

Verse nineteen, God says after they ask Pharaoh to let them go worship Yahweh in the wilderness, He already knows the response from Pharaoh. "But I know..." Like I said in the last section, this is in a perfect tense. God essentially said, "I already know what Pharaoh will say." It's already a completed conclusion in God's mind.

God knew the Israelite elders would listen to Moses, He also knew Pharaoh would not listen to Moses. Pharaoh will reject Moses' request to let Israel go worship.

Once again, how could God know this? It hasn't happened yet.

Not only does God know the future choices of people like the Israelite elders and Pharaoh, but He also knows what set of circumstances are required for a specific outcome. God has such vast knowledge that He knows what situation or set events are needed to cause a specific result.

Look at the rest of verse nineteen. The king of Egypt will not let you go, "except under compulsion." (NASB version). The ESV says, "except compelled." The Hebrew words in this phrase can literally read: "The king of Egypt will not let you go *without a strong (or heavy) hand*."

This idea of a heavy hand means strong compulsion. That is why many English Bibles say the phrase, "without compulsion." Pharaoh will not voluntarily let Israel go per Moses' request. God already knows this. He told Moses this was going to happen.

God goes one step further though. He does not just know what Pharaoh will say, God knows what it will take to get Pharaoh to yield to God. It will require a heavy hand from God, or strong compulsion by God through severe actions against Pharaoh.

Have you ever thought about the fact God does not only know the future, He knows what set of circumstances or events are needed to get a certain response?

This is another level of knowledge that is fascinating to think about God possessing.

Verse twenty backs up what we just saw in verse nineteen. God declared what He will do.

"So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all my wonders (miracles) that I will do in it."

God said He knows Pharaoh will not listen except by the forceful striking of a heavy hand, so, God said He will stretch out His hand of power and make this happen.

The word wonders or miracles means extraordinary and wonderful. It can also mean that something is too wonderful to look at or too difficult to fathom. This is the word used to describe the type of actions God will take against Pharaoh. These actions will be exceedingly powerful to the point we can say they are miraculous, only God could do them. These events later become called the plagues.

The last phrase in verse twenty is important to dwell on too. After God performs these wonderfully powerful actions, “after that he will let you go.”

Again, God knows what set of events are required to get to a specific outcome. God wants Israel freed out of Egypt. God knows Pharaoh is a very wicked man, who thinks of himself as god too. God knows Pharaoh’s heart. He will reject God’s request through Moses to let Israel go. God also knows what it will take to get Pharaoh to yield, unrelenting powerful acts of judgment.

God knows after He performs these acts, Pharaoh will yield.

In verses twenty-one through twenty-two God also promises to grant favor to Israel in the sight of the Egyptians. When Israel leaves after the powerful plagues occur, the Egyptians will voluntarily hand over their gold and other riches to the Israelites.

The result will be that Israel plunders the nation of Egypt.

This concept of plundering Egypt is ironic. When one nation plunders another nation, it means they won the battle and subdued the losing nation. The winning nation takes the spoils and wealth of the losing nation. In order to plunder a nation, you typically have to go to war and win the war. However, there will be no war Israel fights with Egypt. God will be the one engaging in battle for them. Israel will never have to swing a sword in combat against Egypt, yet they will plunder Egypt as a victorious nation in battle.

God Knows the Future & Possible Futures

With all we just explored, think again about the wonderful knowledge of God. He does not just know the future; He knows *possible* futures. Possible futures means that God has a type of knowledge where He knows if one set of circumstances are introduced into a situation, it will lead to a particular outcome. God also knows if a different set of circumstances are introduced into the same situation, it will lead to a different outcome.

For example:

Pretend with me there is a man named Johnny. God knows all about Johnny and sees inside and out of him. God knows what Johnny will do tomorrow and so forth.

God knows that if Johnny is in situation A and another situation B happens to Johnny, then Johnny will take actions as a result. Let’s call the actions Johnny takes in response to situation A & B as C.

So here is the formula: $A+B=C$. Remember A is a situation in Johnny's life, and so is B. C are the actions Johnny take in response to situations A & B.

God does not only know this type of future. He knows all possible futures about Johnny. God also knows that if Johnny is put in situation D instead of B, then Johnny will take different actions, let's call these X.

Now our formula looks like this: $A+D=X$

God knows how each different situation introduced into Johnny's life will cause Johnny to react.

God knew this about Pharaoh. He knew Pharaoh's heart was so hard and wicked that Pharaoh would also say no to Moses unless God introduced harsh judgments.

I share this section with you to help you see that God truly has more types of knowledge and wisdom than we can fathom. He is truly the only wise God and His wisdom is beyond our human understanding.

Isaiah 55:8-9 is a special passage reflecting how God told Isaiah His thoughts and ways are far beyond a person's thoughts and ways. In context God meant He has a much higher ability to forgive and pardon people far beyond what people think is fair to forgive people for their sins. However, it is fair to say that these verses teach us God's ways and wisdom are beyond human understanding fully.

God Guaranteed Moses' Success

Moses had doubts that he could carry out God's call, but the ironic fact is God laid out the entire plan for Moses. God could say to Moses that the victory had already been accomplished, God simply wanted Moses to go be the instrument through which God worked it out. God could not do this unless He had both the power and the wisdom to know what circumstances were needed to get certain responses from Pharaoh.

Conclusion

In this lesson we explored God's vast knowledge. We truly serve an awesome God who cares for His people. He used Moses' background and experiences to prepare him to be the right man for the job to deliver Israel.

God laid out the plan directly for Moses. He shared that Israel would listen to him but Pharaoh would not. However, God told Moses through mighty acts of a heavy hand Pharaoh would eventually yield.

This shows us God does not only have knowledge of the future, He has knowledge of possible futures. God knows what circumstances are needed to accomplish His plans. God knows people so intimately that He knows how they will respond to a given set of circumstances.

God accomplishes His will while letting people have real free will. This is truly the amazing power and wisdom of God on display. He could guarantee Moses' victory through His wisdom and knowledge, yet the people involved in this event are free will agents as well.

This is the kind of God we serve, a truly all-wise God.